

An EPISTLE of *Caution*
and *Advice* to *Parents*, Recom-
mending a *Godly Care* for the
Educating their *Children* in a
Christian Conversation.

Dear Friends,

§ 1. **I**T having pleased the Lord in his great Mercy, to visit a People in this latter Age with the Knowledge of the Truth; and having brought us to a certain Understanding, That the Blessings thereof are only enjoyed in following the Lord in the strait and narrow Way that leads to Life; wherein, by the daily Bearing the Holy Cross, it hath in a good Degree, crucified us to the World, and the World unto us; whereby the Temptations of it become daily more and more weakened, and our Souls set free to serve the Lord in Righteousness and Holiness. And forasmuch, as next to our own Souls, our Offspring are, or ought to be, the most immediate Objects of our Care and Concern, being a

peculiar Blessing from God ; so we ought to be thankful to him for them, and wait upon him for Wisdom from above, thereby to be enabled, rightly to discharge our Duties towards them, and then we shall be eminently careful to be good Examples to our Children, as well as diligently exercised in a conscientious Care and Concern for them.

§ 2. And in order to make this the more Easy to us, and Effectual to them, Parents should begin with their Children betimes, and endeavour, to teach them, as soon as they are capable of Instruction, that their Wills ought to be entirely subject to the Will of God, and to the good Advice of their Parents. And we desire particular Care may be taken, to require nothing of them that is unreasonable, or unbecoming religious and tender Parents ; for where a due Care hath been neglected and put off, until they are grown up pretty far in Years, it hath been often seen by woeful Experience, that it is then too late to bring them into that Subjection which is their incumbent Duty.

§ 3. *Dear Friends,* Be early careful to keep them out of the vain Fashions, and evil Ways of the World, and bring them up from the first, in *Plainness of Language,*
Apparel

Apparel and Behaviour, which may be a Means to prevent their being drawn therefrom, by the Practice of others, when they are grown up.

§ 4. Be careful to bring your Children, in their young Years, to Meetings, not only on the first Day of the Week, but on other Days also; which has been of great Advantage to many; and instruct them to sit sober when there, and to have an awful Sense of God upon their Minds, and to be diligent in attending the Testimonies of Truth, when Testimonies are born, that they may feel the Love of God to season their Spirits.

§ 5. And we entreat and exhort Friends, to labour with their Minds stay'd in the Gift of God, to bring their Children to a Sense of the same Gift in themselves, impressing on their Minds an Awe and Fear towards Him, *which is the Beginning of Wisdom*. And as they advance in Years, cause them frequently and reverently to read the Holy Scriptures, and endeavour to make them sensible of the great Love of God in sending his Son Christ Jesus into the World; as also, of the great Benefit of his Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Mediation, in order to the great Work of Salvation; instructing them in the Work

of Sanctification, through his blessed Spirit, that they may know the Operation thereof, against every Thing that is wrong, and thereby may come to distinguish between Good and Evil in themselves, and see the great Benefit there is in a sober, virtuous, and religious Life, and the many Mischiefs and ill Consequences that attend the contrary, that so they may embrace the one and avoid the other; for as they learn to make a godly Conversation their Choice in their young and tender Years, the Cross of Christ will become easy unto them.

§ 6. And as the Minds of Children are early busied about something or other, and apt to receive any Impressions, we advise. That beside the Reading the Holy Scriptures, they may have the Advantage of reading other good Books, tending to promote the true Principles of the Christian Religion.

And we earnestly exhort and entreat all Friends, as much as in them lies, to keep their Children from reading prophane Books, Romances, and Pamphlets, which tend to infect the Minds of Youth, and which Children are too apt to please themselves with.

§ 7. And Friends are desired to remember, That indulging them in Pride, Idleness, and
Luxury,

Luxury, is a great Fault in Parents, as well as of dangerous Consequence to Children, according to the Testimony of *Ezekiel*, Chap. xvi. ver. 49, 50. *Behold this was the Iniquity of Sodom, Pride, Fulness of Bread, and Abundance of Idleness was in her, and in her Daughters, neither did she strengthen the Hand of the Poor and Needy: And they were Haughty, and committed Abomination before me, therefore I took them away as I saw good.* Wherefore Parents ought to be very careful to restrain their Children from those Things which lay a Foundation for very great Evils. And when they perceive an Inclination in them to Pride, to take care no ways to promote or encourage it, but on the contrary, as much as may be, restrain it. And an especial Concern should be early taken, to prevent a Habit of Idleness, and therefore some Employment, suitable to their Circumstances, ought to be provided for them.

§ 8. For those who are bred up in Pride and Idleness, do often, if their Circumstances permit it, live in Luxury, and spend their Thoughts (that might be better employ'd) in contriving what they shall eat and drink, and cloath themselves withal; and sometimes can hardly invent any Thing delicate enough for them; so that it is

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no wonder that many, whose Education has been after this Manner, spend their precious Time and Substance about Things which are prejudicial to the Health and Welfare both of Body and Soul, and reproachful to our holy Profession. And to the End that the Labour and good Advice of Parents may take the better Effect, great Care should be taken to keep Children out of bad Company, and to have such Servants as are religiously enclined, sober, discreet, and orderly; for it hath been found by Experience, That such Servants who are Strangers to the Cross of Christ, have been a Means to turn many of our Friends Children from the Plainness and Simplicity of the Truth, and lead them into vain and vicious Company, whereby they have been greatly corrupted in their Minds, and a Spirit of undue Liberty hath prevailed to their great Hurt.

§ 9. And we believe Friends might find it profitable, as they feel the Lord seasoning their Spirits thereunto, to wait upon Him with their Children in their Families for the Manifestation of his Blessed Power, that they may witness his Seed of Life and Grace in their Hearts, to beget in them a living Knowledge, and Love of Truth in themselves, that they may come to know
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the Work of Sanctification and Regeneration; the Consequence of which will be, that virtuous, holy, and religious Conversation, which we desire they may grow up in, and then they will be an Ornament to our holy Profession, and be preserved from the sorrowful Effect of a loose and vicious Conduct; and we Question not, but as Friends are duly exercised herein, the Lord will of his Mercy open in them suitable Counsel and Advice to their Children and Families, and will give a Blessing to their sincere Endeavours.

§ 10. And let it be also the Care of Friends, at proper Seasons, to tell their Children their own Experience, and what God hath done for their Souls: For it is very often seen, that the good Impressions that Children receive in their tender Years from their Parents are not easily worn out. As the Psalmist says, *We have heard with our Ears, O God, our Fathers have told us, what Works thou didst in their Days, in the Times of old,* Psal. 44.

§ 11. And as there is an incumbent Duty on Parents in the Education of their Children; so the same lies on School-Masters, and therefore what is herein recommended to Parents, ought to be put in Practice (as much as may be) by Masters, Mistresses, and
Tutors

Tutors of Children; and those School-Masters that teach the *Latin* and *Greek* Tongues should be careful not to make use (in their several Schools) of any *Heathen* Authors, that tend to Profaneness, Lasciviousness, or Immorality.

So, *dear Friends*, we having an earnest Desire that Truth may prosper, and, that *Zion* may become an eternal Excellency, and *Jerusalem* the Praise of the whole Earth, and your Children may follow the Steps of our worthy Antients; and, that the Name of the Lord may be magnified from Generation to Generation, do in a Christian Concern of Mind recommend these Things to you, heartily desiring, that you may find the same Concern to put them in practice, as have been on Friends Minds in this Meeting to recommend them to you.

Lond. the 29th of the
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By Direction of the
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